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VIII  
(Özel Sayı)



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Editör

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MERSİN  
2003

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*saygıyla anıyoruz...*

*OLBA'nın Basılması İçin Vermiş Olduđu Desteklerden Dolayı*  
*Mersin Üniversitesi Rektörü Prof. Dr. Uğur Oral'a*  
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# TEMPLE-CHURCH IN OLBA AND THE REUSE OF ANTIQUITY MONUMENTS IN LATE ANTIQUITY

(LEV. 22-26)

Burcu CEYLAN\*

## ÖZET

Kilikya bölgesinde önemli bir yerel kült merkezi olan Zeus Olbios Tapınağı, Geç Antik ve Bizans dönemlerinin önemli olgularından biri olan yapıların ikinci kullanımlarına önemli bir örnek oluşturmaktadır. Bildiri, Zeus Olbios Tapınağı'ndan yola çıkarak Antik dönem yapılarının Geç Antik ve Bizans dönemlerinde ikinci kullanımının yöntem ve nedenlerin ortaya konmasının yanı sıra, ikinci kullanım yapıların dönem mimarisi içindeki yerlerinin belirlenmesini de amaçlamaktadır. Mimari anlamda ikinci kullanım, zaman içinde değişen sosyo-ekonomik koşullar nedeniyle yapıların veya yapı elemanlarının, gerekli mimari uyarlamalarla, yeni işlevler yüklenmesi olarak tanımlanabilir. İkinci kullanım, yapı elemanlarının diğer bir yapıda malzeme olarak kullanılmasından (spolia), yapının tamamının başka bir işlev yüklenmesine kadar geniş bir uygulama yelpazesi içinde, dönem mimarisine damgasını vurmuştur. Geç Antik dönem üzerindeki çalışmaların çoğunda ikinci kullanım olgusundan söz edilirken yarı yarıya yok olmuş Klasik dönem şehirlerin yapılarının maruz kaldığı ilkesiz bir talan görüntüsü çizilir. Ancak, M.S. 320 yıllarından başlamak üzere imparatorluk kanunlarıyla, yapıların ve mimari malzemenin ikinci kullanımlarına bir düzen getirilmeye çalışılmıştır. 3. yüzyıl içinde bozulan ekonomi ve Hıristiyan imparatorluğun ideolojisi, anıtların ikinci kullanımını iki ana nedeni olarak ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Öte yandan, dönem koşulları incelendiğinde ikinci kullanımın, sur duvarları arkasında, kıyasla daha az bir alana çekilmek zorunda kalan şehirlerde yeni yapılar için gerekli arazinin sağlanması, mimari alandaki uzman sayısının yetersizliği, artık işlevini kaybetmiş antik dönem anıtlarının korunması, Hıristiyan tarihi ile ilgili antik dönem yapılarının kullanıma açılması gibi çok çeşitli sorunlara da çözüm getirdiği anlaşılmaktadır. Yapıların ya da malzemelerin ikinci kullanımlarının, dönem mimari aktivitesinin sürdürülmesine katkısının yanı sıra dönemin değişen estetik

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\* Yrd. Doç. Dr. Burcu Ceylan, Erciyes Üniversitesi, Mimarlık Fakültesi, Üniversite Kampüsü. TR-38039 Kayseri.

anlayışı ile etkileşim içinde, Geç Antik ve Bizans dönemleri mimarilerinde de belirleyici rolü olmuştur. Mimari elemanların devşirilmesi bina ölçeğinde mimariyi etkilerken, yapıların ikinci kullanımının da şehir ve genel görünümü bazında etkileri olduğu anlaşılmaktadır.

Temple of Zeus Olbios in the ancient town of Olba is one of the remarkable antique monuments of Cilicia, owing its reputation both to its historical value, for being one of the earliest temples in Corinthian order, and its good state of preservation. It is a peristyle Corinthian temple with 6 columns on short sides and 13 on the long sides (fig. 2). Today not much can be seen of the spatial layout of the temple since it went through a conversion process in late antiquity during which all the walls of the building was torn down to form a large basilical church.<sup>1</sup>

The church was composed of a nave and two side isles, a three-part narthex, an internally semi-circle externally straight apsis and side-chambers on both sides with their *apsidae* (fig 3,4). Entrance was provided by three doors on the axis of the building. In addition, there are two arched gateways on the north and south walls. Again, three doors from the parts of the narthex open to the nave and isles. Galleries above the narthex and isles were reached by a staircase on the northeast corner of the narthex. Beam holes of the gallery can be seen on the upper parts of the columns (fig 5). Although the majority of the Christian elements of the building was cleared in 1950's without a record; the stylobates of the colonnades, which once carried the galleries, and the floor of the slightly raised bema can partly be seen. (fig.6) A foundation on the eastern end of the isles either belongs to a chancel screen or western walls of the extensions of side chambers.<sup>2</sup> There is no trace of an atrium, however the temenos must have been used for the gathering of the congregation as it is frequently seen in other temple conversions in Anatolia.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The temple phase of the building is beyond the scope of this paper since the aim is to examine the Christian phase of the building and through it, to discuss the reuse of the classical monuments in Late Antique period. For the descriptions, dating and bibliography on the temple see Keil-Wilhelm 1931, Börker 1971, Williams 1974 and Wannagat 1999

<sup>2</sup> Feld 1963/1964 s.97-98, Hild, Hellenkemper, Hellenkemper-Salies 1984 s.242-244, Hild, Hellenkemper, Hellenkemper-Salies 1990 s.240, Hill 1996 s.252-254.

<sup>3</sup> Ceylan 2000 s.212-21.



During the conversion process, the walls of cella was cleared and their material was reused to form the walls of the basilica by infilling the intercolumniations of the peristyle. All the columns were left in situ, except the two in the middle of east side, to provide room for the apsis. The steps reaching the temple stylobate were also taken away, leaving the row of stones under the column bases to form a profiled base for the walls of the church. While the narthex was formed within the limits of the peristyle by constructing a wall between the second intercolumniations of north and south sides, eastern part extends the boundaries of the temple. Therefore, the church is larger than the temple.

With features like triple west entrance, flat eastern facade, gallery above the narthex, the temple-church in Olba fit to the Cilician tradition of church planning<sup>4</sup>. Although the date of the conversion was given as 5<sup>th</sup> century AD by Hild, Hellenkemper and Hellenkemper-Salies,<sup>5</sup> there is no firm evidence for dating the church. Yet, the stylistic character of the church is in accordance with the local churches of 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries. Given the knowledge that the reuse of temples started to cease by 7<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>6</sup> 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries appear to be a reasonable dating.

Architectural reuse can be described as the re-functioning of buildings or building materials with necessary modifications. Reuse, ranges from *spolia*, that is the reuse of building materials in new constructions, to complete conversions of buildings into new functions.<sup>7</sup>

Majority of the studies on late antiquity draw an image of architectural pillage on ruins of half-destroyed antique cities. However, starting from early decades of 4<sup>th</sup> century, there are several imperial decrees on the reuse of buildings and building materials. They demonstrate a policy of architectural conservation by which the authorities tried to maintain not only the monuments but also the civic pride that helped to produce them.<sup>8</sup> Yet,

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<sup>4</sup> Hill 1996 s.16-25.

<sup>5</sup> Hild, Hellenkemper, Hellenkemper-Salies 1984 s.244.

<sup>6</sup> Ceylan 2000 s.245-246.

<sup>7</sup> For the bibliography on architectural reuse see Ceylan 2000, s. 43-56. Also see Ward-Perkins 1999 and Milojevic 1997.

<sup>8</sup> *Codex Theodosianus*, 15.1 and 16.10.

these measures proved to be ineffective and by 5<sup>th</sup> century, reuse became a regular phase of construction.

The phenomenon of architectural reuse can be approached in several different ways. For instance, the reasons behind it were discussed by numerous scholars and majorly related to economical and ideological factors. Those factors can be summed up as follows:

- decaying economic conditions of late Antiquity, forcing people to make advantage of older buildings;
- changing social conditions, causing a number of building types to be abandoned thus providing extra opportunities for reuse,
- lack of spaces in the towns which were forced to withdraw behind the walls due to the insecure conditions of Late Antiquity,
- the difficulty to find a suitable space for Christian buildings within the already densely built up city center,
- the insufficient number of skilled craftsmen as also recorded by imperial decrees,<sup>9</sup>
- ideological factors especially in the cases of temple conversions or buildings associated with the Christian history of the towns that is symbolizing the victory of Christianity over paganism,

In the majority of the cases, the reasons appear to be pragmatic rather than ideological. However, the ideological factors in the temple conversions cannot be denied, especially when they were converted into the cathedral churches of towns. Yet, it must be kept in mind that not all the temples were converted into churches and there are several examples where churches were converted from secular buildings.

In the case of Olba, more than one of the above-mentioned reasons can be valid. The Temple of Zeus Olbios had been an important sacred spot not only for Olba but also for the region. Therefore, its conversion into the

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<sup>9</sup> In a decree of 334, Constantine, due to a lack of the skilled man in the field of architecture, orders the local governor to encourage the youth to learn the art of building. Another decree, again of Constantine, exempting artists and artisans from public duties, points on the insufficient number of these specialists. Mango 1978, s.35.

cathedral church of the town must be important for the Christian community. Its central location within the city on the crossing of the two main arteries must have been considered a perfect place for the cathedral (fig 1). And, its outstanding appearance must have been another reason for its preference. By converting the temple, the Christians not only found a magnificent building for their cathedral, both in its scale and architecture, thanks to the artists and architects of Hellenistic period, but also managed to preserve a marvel of their city.

Another approach to the reuse of buildings can be the methodological classification. A study on the recorded cases revealed that there are certain architectural methods, which were employed in reusing the antique buildings. Most common method was adapting the entire building into a new function. In this case, to suit the building to its new function, necessary arrangements, ranging from simple furniture to big scale structural changes were made. Another widely used method was dividing the larger spaces of buildings into smaller units to house different functions. Allotment of large houses into smaller slums or blocking of the colonnades are examples which are the most common. Buildings with large open spaces like agorae or gymnasia were opened to new constructions, in which case the floors of these open spaces formed the floors of the new buildings. This forms another method of reuse.

Although there are numerous examples for all of the methods, in very rare cases, a complex structural alteration can be observed. Those changes majorly include newly built walls within the original structure of older building. Again, in very few cases the new building is bigger in scale than its predecessor. Temple-church in Olba is one of these exceptional examples. Two other important examples are from Aphrodisias, where the Temple of Aphrodite converted into the Church of St. Michael and from Ephesos, where the south stoa of Temple of Hadrian converted into the church of St. Mary.<sup>10</sup>

The issue, which has considerable importance and yet not studied in great deal, is the status of reuse within the aesthetic notion of the period. Because, the reuse of materials or buildings strongly affected the character

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<sup>10</sup> For the conversion of Temple of Aphrodite see Cormack 1990, Doruk 1990 and for the Church of Mary see Karwiese 1989, and Karwiese 1995.

of the architecture of the period. Approaching with classical values, reuse or spolia has been considered a sign of decline in the architecture and aesthetics of the period. However, it would be more proper to evaluate the architecture created by reuse, through the values of Late Antique period.

Although the professions related with building construction were in decline, the structural quality of reuse must not be underestimated. Constructing with materials of different sizes and shapes that are collected from different buildings requires a certain level of technical knowledge and skill. The same is also true for altering a building without destroying the elements, which were desired to be kept in place, as we see in the case of Olba. On the other hand, while criticizing the irregularity of spolian masonry; it must be kept in mind that these walls were intended to be covered internally by stucco, mosaic or by marble.

Another point is that the reuse was not a product of 4<sup>th</sup> century alone but rather an outcome of the developments in Roman architecture that occurred in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries. Roman architecture had never adopted the strong regulations of Greek architecture and it was open to improvisation. Resultant “baroque” of Roman architecture brought the utilization of structural elements like columns, architraves, arches or pediments in decorative purposes, examples of which can be seen all over Anatolia in stage buildings or *nymphaeae*.<sup>11</sup> Those elements, which have lost their structural functions, also lost the meaning they had had in classical architecture and they formed examples of an ordered collage. Therefore, their usage in unusual contexts and places, as it was the case in applications of reuse, might not seemed that much illogical by 4<sup>th</sup> century.

Although it was based on the classical heritage, Christian Late Antique world created a new culture different from the Classical world. Using features of classical architecture not in accordance with classical tradition may be taken to symbolize this attempt. This can be observed in the churches of emperor Constantine, who introduced the earliest examples of reuse.

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<sup>11</sup> Lyttelton 1974, s.9-16

It is not possible to make a concrete statement about the theoretical reasons behind architectural reuse. Yet, it is certain that an aesthetic understanding which praised the variety and diversity, evolved in the Late Antique period. Echoes of the same esteem for *varietas* can be found in the panegyrics of later Byzantine writers.<sup>12</sup> Same taste of *varietas* could also be searched in bigger scale. Reused buildings, which differ from the buildings of the period with their unique solutions of conversion, must have contributed to the desired diversity. For instance, temple-church of Olba itself must obviously had quite an unusual appearance with its columns showing on the facades.

These diverse appearances might not considered improper, if not desirable, due to a remarkable change in the public opinion toward outdoor spaces and urban aesthetics, in connection. Roman city of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries was developed for satisfying the civic pride. The whole city, not only the individual buildings but also the urban layout which brought them together by colonnades, arcades, avenues, and plazas, conceived as a showcase for displaying grandeur. The civic spirit demanded and also helped maintaining the stunning appearance of cities.<sup>13</sup>

However, by the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the activities supporting a dynamic city life, many of which were pagan origin and took place on outdoors, started to disappear. Moreover, citizens became more and more segregated from the government and lost interest in the affairs of the city. As a result of these changing social and political conditions, urban culture of antique world was replaced with an introverted lifestyle. A decrease in the use of urban spaces accompanied by a decrease in public interest in urban aesthetics.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, for people who was transforming from an ordinary

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<sup>12</sup> Konstantine of Rhodes mentions the beauty of the variety of columns, which brought together from several different places in the enkomion he prepared for the Church of Holy Apostles in Constantinople. Epstein 1982, s.81. A similar variety appears even in non-spolian architectural members in 6<sup>th</sup> century. Mango 1978, s.34. Also see Brenk 1987, s.105 and Saradi-Mendelovici 1990, s.53

<sup>13</sup> For the architectural unity within the Roman cities, see MacDonald 1984, s.249-253

<sup>14</sup> Kazhdan argues that transition from pagan religion, where most of the religious rituals took place in the open air, to Christianity which embraces the believer in the microcosmos of the enclosed church, found its reflection in the city aesthetics. Kazhdan 1982, s.432. He proposes that the church embraces some of the functions of the city and makes an analogy between the columns of churches and colonnaded avenues. Kazhdan 1982, s.454 and s.463. Also see Mathews 1971, s.178.

citizen to a member of large Christian community, the appearance of their native cities lost its importance.<sup>15</sup> The architecture of reuse was quite distinct from the splendor of classical style and with its simple solutions, it must have been suitable for Christian ideals in aesthetics, which favored modesty and despised ostentation.

It is a known fact that antique culture including its architecture was admired in Late Antique and Byzantine periods.<sup>16</sup> After the disappearance of antique traditions, the artists and architects of the period, lacking necessary cultural foundation, developed a new aesthetic understanding that was based on reuse. The result was not aesthetically backward but different with the conditions and facilities of Late Antiquity.

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<sup>15</sup> Citizens that had been proud of their native city started to call themselves as *Romaioi*, Romans by 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Hanfmann 1975, s.56. After the 7<sup>th</sup> century, even being a Roman citizen lost its importance, when being a Christian was enough within the limits of the empire. Mango 1980, s.31.

<sup>16</sup> As late as 13<sup>th</sup> century, Theodore Ducas Laskaris admires the ruins of Pergamon as a creation of antique world. Mango 1972, s.245. For the interest of Byzantine elite in preserving the antique culture see Kazhdan 1982, s.475-4767.

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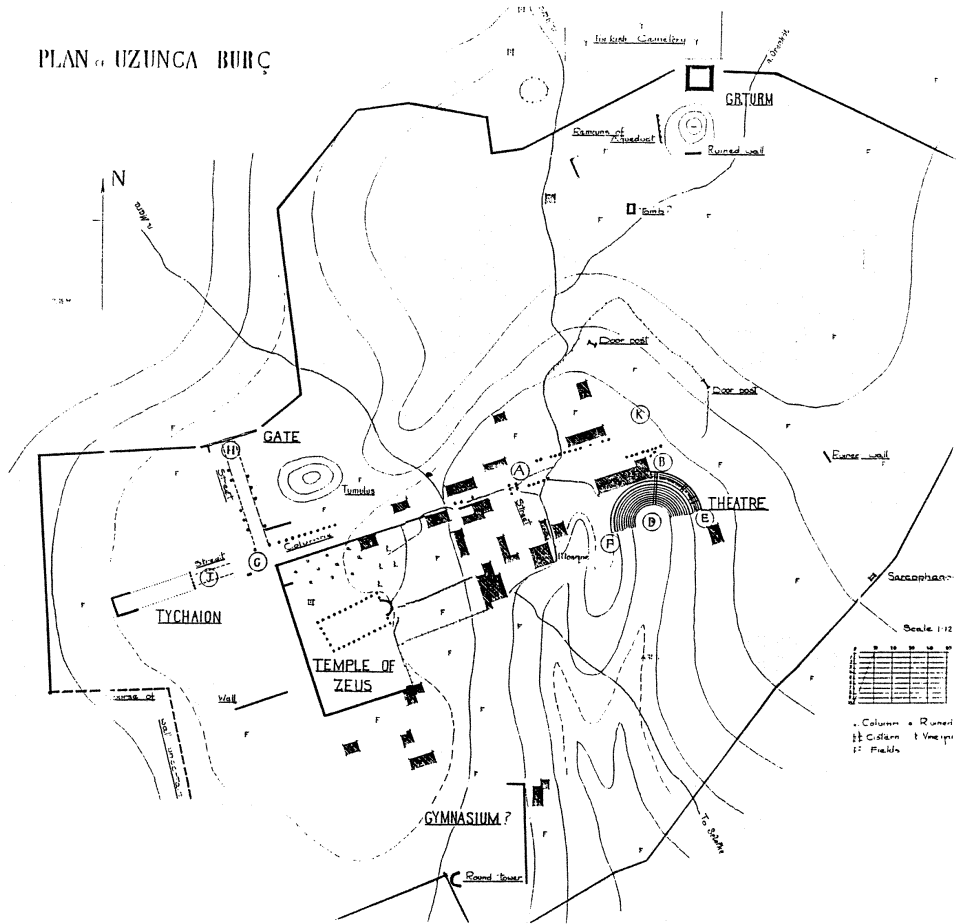


Fig. 1 Plan of Olba Diocaesarea.

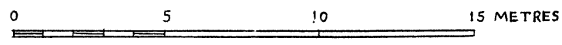
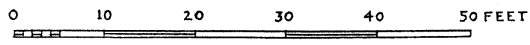
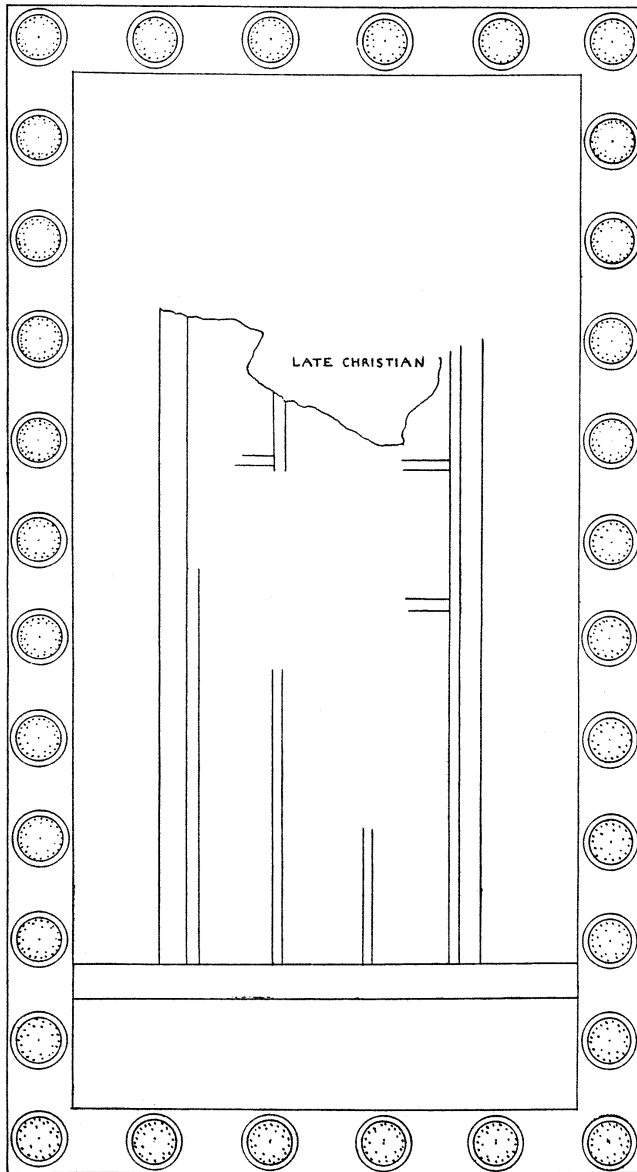


Fig. 2 Temple of Zeus-Olbios, plan, Keil-Willhelm 1931.

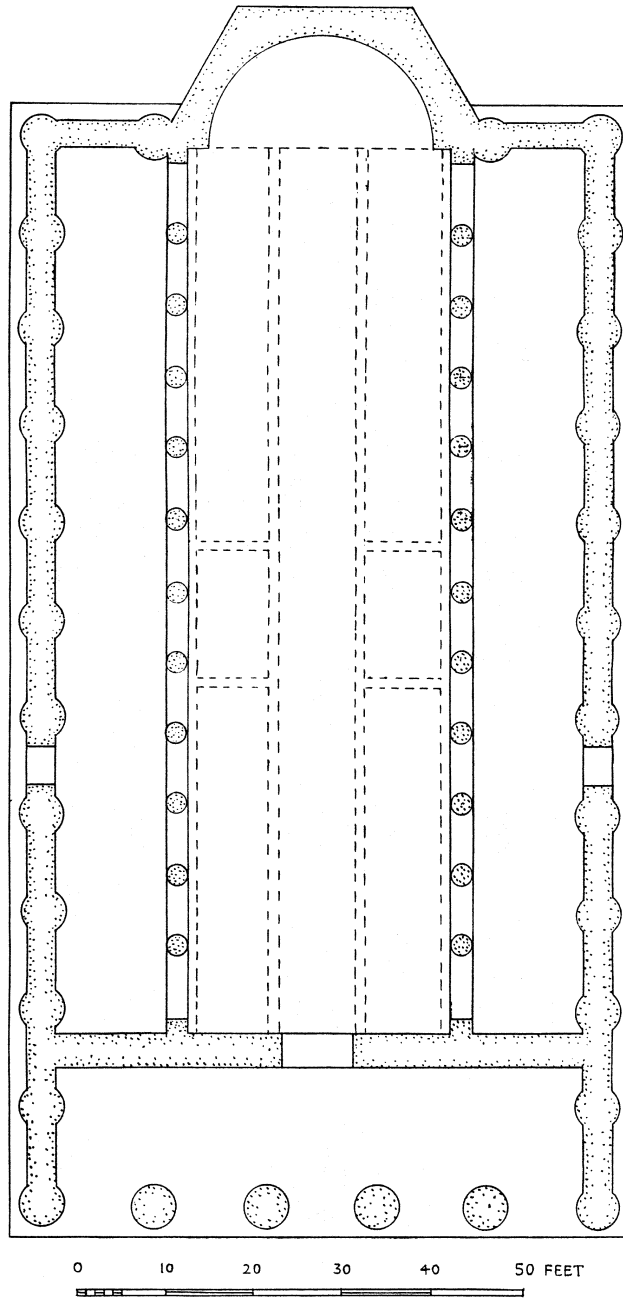


Fig. 3 Temple church, plan, Keil-Willhelm 1931.

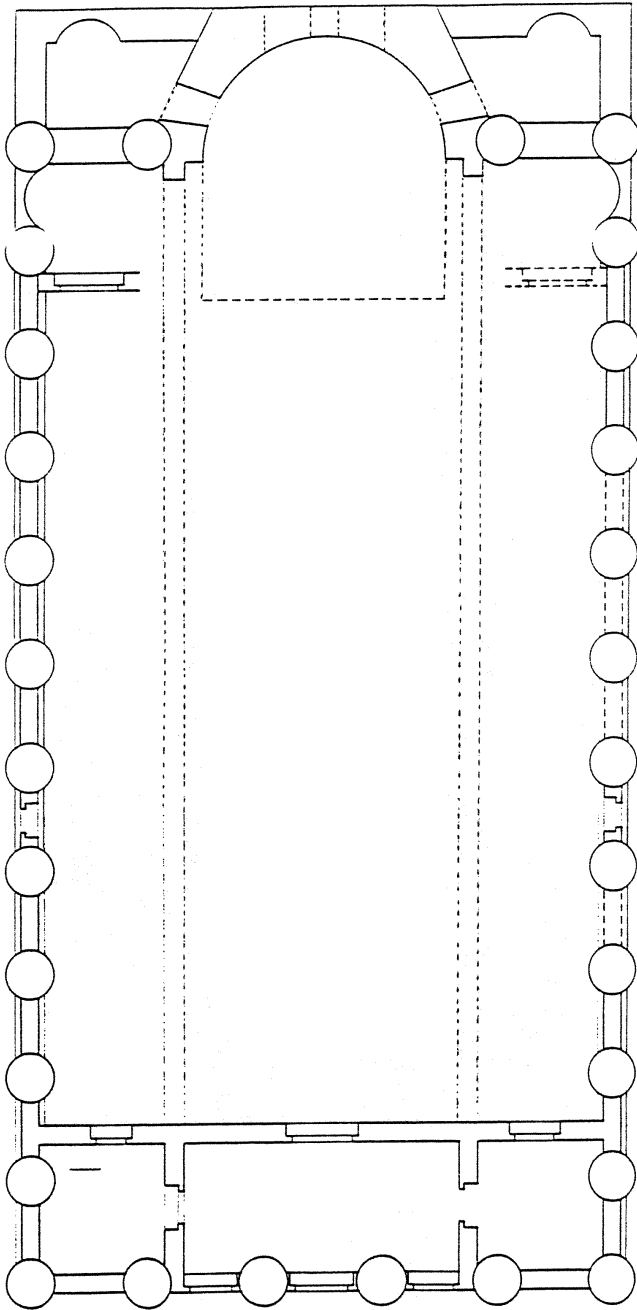


Fig. 4 Temple-churc, plan, Hild, Hellenkemper, Hellenkemper-Salies 1984.



Fig. 5



Fig. 6